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DIMENSIONS OF US-LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS

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The views, opinions, and/or findings contained in this report are those of the author and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.

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by

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FOREWORD

This memorandum considers the implications of the increased interaction of Latin American countries with the international system. The author asserts that the new Latin American environment is developing at a time when the United States has deliberately embarked on a sweeping reassessment and redirection of its relations with Latin America, including lowering its profile and loosening its ties to the Inter-American system. As a result, the military component of the Inter-American system has undergone severe stress, as evidenced by strained bilateral relations with strategically important countries and in the search for alternative means of relating bilaterally as well as multilaterally. The author concludes it is the task of the United States to respond creatively in order to secure its interests in the hemisphere.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. GABRIEL MARCELLA joined the Strategic Studies Institute in 1974. He graduated from St. Joseph's College with a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies, earned a master's degree in history from Syracuse University, and a doctorate in Latin American history and politics from Notre Dame. His foreign studies include a Fullbright-Hayes fellowship to Ecuador. Dr. Marcella's professional background includes teaching Latin American studies at Chestnut Hill and Rosemont Colleges, Temple University, the University of Indiana, and Notre Dame. He has written on a broad range of topics relating to Latin American history and international affairs.

DIMENSIONS OF US-LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS

US military relations with Latin America have reached difficult proportions. As the result of changes in the geopolitical environment, of the persisting asymmetries in inter-American affairs, and recent initiatives by the United States in human rights and arms control policies, the underpinnings of the Inter-American Military System—that body of organizations, experiences, exchanges, traditions, common doctrine, and the associated notion of hemispheric collective security—have been badly shaken. In the words of a leading contemporary authority on inter-American security, the system is in "significant and perhaps fatal decline."[1] The reasons for this decline and the future of military relations are explored in succeeding pages. It must be noted at the outset that Latin America is experiencing important geopolitical change, and this change in turn affects the dimension of military relations. A related question is the utility of military relations with nations, the majority of which are marginal to the central security concerns of the United States.

GEOPOLITICS, NATIONALISM, NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Consistent with changes in the international environment of bipolarity to multipolarity, the nations of Latin America are inserting

themselves more directly into international affairs. A region which in global terms has historically been "neither decisive nor influential"[2] interacts with the international system and within itself to an increasing degree. The indices of this interaction are varied: diversifying trade patterns both in the North-South direction, but increasingly in an East-West Southern Hemisphere (Brazil into Africa, Middle East OPEC countries into Latin America); initiatives in Law of the Seas; participation in international organizations; the development of some countries as important food exporters to the world community; energy sources; technological advancement; Cuban Third World activism; the potential for nuclear proliferation in the region; the diffusion of conventional military power; and the diversification of sources of military equipment.

The indices of interaction parallel another manifest global trend—ideological pluralism—a willingness to experiment with a variety of political, economic, and social forms in order to build more integrated nation-states. For better or for worse, whether termed civilian democracies (Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica), authoritarian corporatist military reformism of the right (Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia) or of the left (Peru, at an earlier time) or of the center (Ecuador, Honduras), or one party democratic corporatism (Mexico), or Cuban Socialism, Latin American governments today are more effective than ever before. With some notable exceptions, the nations of Latin America are more participatory, collect more taxes, invest more, build more and educate more, grow more food, and in general articulate national interests within the international community better than they have at any time in their history. Admittedly, the distribution of goods and services remains regressive and few, if any, have solved the dilemmas confronting all developing countries, i.e., how to simultaneously maximize productivity, socio-political participation, and economic redistribution without engendering the tensions that erode bases of support.

A new nationalism, termed developmental, characterizes Latin America. Development is equated with social integration and national security, in a correlation felicitously rendered "of mutual casuality" by the Brazilians. Development may also be equated with nuclear power, both as an energy source and ultimately for a modest nuclear capability. In sum, these trends indicate that the foundations are being established for more viable and assertive nation-states and only time will tell which of them achieve viability and a more influential role in international affairs.

The new dynamism in Latin America's international affairs exists alongside some of the traditional descriptors and modes. It remains an economically and technologically dependent area and no economy of the region has developed the infrastructure and the sustained high rates of internal investment necessary to generate self-sustaining economic growth. Most have urban-rural and class imbalances in which major portions (if not majorities) of the population are not participating in the benefits of growth. Income levels are widening rather than diminishing. What this portends for the development of viable polities is not good, for if the past is any guide for the future, income and satisfaction levels must rise more uniformly. Politically, what it portends is the continuation of the seemingly unending cycle of the crises of legitimacy, participation, and distribution—expressed in terms of weakly-based governments attempting to resolve problems through a multiplicity of civilian and military technocratic forms.

As these countries externalize their internal weaknesses in foreign policy, the majority will continue to be "neither decisive nor influential" in world affairs. There are important qualifications to this generalization—Brazil, by virtue of its size, population, resources, industrial base, and its developmentalist leadership; Venezuela with its petroleum and OPEC linkages; Mexico with some of the same characteristics possessed by Brazil plus large quantities of petroleum deposits yet to be exploited; and Cuba with its activist revolutionary foreign policy and critical Soviet support. In a second level ranking would be Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Colombia with significant resource bases. Yet the four confront internal political cleavages of a magnitude that precludes them from acquiring major influence in international affairs for some time to come. The Soviet toehold in Peru, expressed in the recent acquisition of armor and air power, though it may influence the regional balance on the West Coast of South America, does not seem to provide the opportunity for the expansion of Soviet ideological influence beyond Cuba.

A subregional sketch indicates a high level of dynamics in geopolitical change. In the Caribbean, the newly emerging and yet to emerge English-speaking ministates and microstates are basically unviable by themselves and will need outside support. England is reluctant for domestic reasons to provide this support and is opting to play a diminishing role in Caribbean affairs. Belize, which is coveted by Guatemala, and wants independence with British support, demonstrates the limits of a continued British presence in the Caribbean.

Concurrently, Caribbean countries are experimenting with indigenous forms of socialism—Jamaica's "democratic socialism" and Guyana's "cooperative socialism"—in order to eliminate internal cleavages, increase production, and construct more integrated societies. Cuba, by virtue of location, its activist diplomacy, Soviet support, and forceful intrusion into African affairs, has become a power both to be feared and admired. It has opted to become a more moderate actor in the region, preferring correct state to state relations to the export of revolution in order to project itself as a disinterested and fraternal developing nation, anxious to help in tasks of nation-building. Yet Cuba's image as such will continue to be tarnished by Soviet ties and totalitarianism.

In their search for development and the effort to secure their internal bases of support, Caribbean countries are diversifying their linkages within the international community. But it is increasingly clear that despite efforts at nonalignment and an occasional dalliance with the Socialist bloc, the United States will continue to be looked upon as the principal source of capital investment, technology, aid, and the main market for the region's products and surplus labor. Moreover, the vacuum left by gradual British disengagement and the incipient Cuban role strongly urges the United States to assume a more active hand, bilaterally and multilaterally, to address Caribbean problems. The Carter Administration, through recent high-level visits by Mrs. Carter, Ambassador Andrew Young, and Assistant Secretary Terenee Todman, has indicated a willingness to assume a more sympathetic role. It is noteworthy that whereas US-Latin American relations have been generally filled with tension in the past two years, US-Caribbean relations are on the upswing.

Elsewhere the Latin American political scene is experiencing important changes. Mexico's leadership change to the Lopez-Portillo administration augurs a more determined effort to address Mexico's internal problems and partially disengage from the Third World activism of Echeverria. At the same time, Mexico faces the critical question of how to maximize the benefits of its newly found oil wealth before its internal socio-economic problems reach unmanageable proportions. Because of proximity and the increasing level of economic and cultural integration with its northern neighbor, Mexico's problems automatically become those of the United States. This interdependence is best evidenced by illegal migration and its associated problems.

In Central America the environment is identified by the enduring

problems of traditional "conflict societies" that are attempting to modernize and simultaneously avoid the accompanying tension and political dislocations. Military and authoritarian governments predominate with varying degrees of success in achieving those objectives. Nicaragua in a sense represents a prototype of the political stalemate of all Latin America—liberalizing political system encased in a country with a traditional authority system and weakly-based political parties. Change toward a more open society oriented in the direction of socio-economic development will be politically traumatic. The trauma in turn affects relations with other nations.

In South America there is ample evidence of the growth of more assertive and effective states that are better able to articulate national interests. The impact on geopolitics is the renaissance of often dormant border issues, the competition for subsoil and maritime resources, and the tracing out of classical spheres of influence with the panoply of economic, political and military influences. On the West Coast of South America, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and, to a lesser extent, Ecuador and Argentina, are deeply involved in positioning themselves for yet another review of the age-old Tacna-Arica dispute, the related Bolivian quest for a territorial outlet to the sea, and for the refighting 100 years later of the War of the Pacific. Coincidentally, the three principals are led by military governments emerging from their own unique efforts at national integration—Chile's authoritarian corporatism, following the overthrow of the Allende Socialist experiment, Peru's radical reformism, and Bolivia's version of the Brazilian model.

Of the three, none has been particularly successful in achieving its internal goals and all have recently focused their attention on external defense. Argentina recently adopted a more intransigent position toward Chile in the Beagle Channel dispute, where the stakes are potentially much greater with the presence of krill and petroleum deposits than the desolate Atacama. Yet the Beagle Channel dispute, the Peru-Chile-Bolivia issue, and the British-Argentine dispute over the Falkland Islands are minuets for internal and institutional maneuvering among the respective military governments. In the aggregate, whether it be a case of posturing for internal consumption or for more substantial international stakes, these events indicate that the governments can mobilize significant popular support by defining threats to the individual nation's security. The same observation applies to Ecuadorian-Peruvian tensions over the territorial question of the *oriente* and recent petroleum finds in the sensitive border areas. Colombia and

Venezuela are involved in their own dispute over the contiguous continental shelf and the presumed location of petroleum deposits as well as important disagreements on the flow of undocumented Colombian laborers into Venezuela.

All of these examples are cited as evidence that Latin America is no longer a quiescent region, generally devoid of any serious potential for conflict. Nothing could be farther from the truth today. The most important development is Brazil's emergence as the major power in Latin America, with the potential to develop into the first Southern Hemisphere nation to achieve major power status. In recognition of Brazil's importance in world affairs, the United States entered into an agreement with that country to conduct high-level consultations—the February 21, 1976 Brazil-United States Memorandum of Understanding. The memorandum was further recognition that Brazil had reached a level of importance upon which the United States could rely to perform some functions of an ally in certain limited areas of international affairs—the Middle East, Africa, and importantly in South America. Brazil's power ascendancy has generated the inevitable competition with its immediate neighbor and the only other claimant for leadership in Latin America—Argentina. Argentina is hopelessly outdistanced by Brazil in all elements of national power and only in the area of nuclear power development does it enjoy a technological lead. In the meantime Brazil's growing economic clout is being felt in the bordering countries—Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia—and also in the penetration of West African markets.

THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA— THE PERSISTENT ASYMMETRIES

The sum and substance of the changing geopolitical environment—the new nationalism, the heightened international role, and the appearance of intraregional tensions—comes at a time when the United States is opting to loosen the umbilical cord that has tethered it so closely to Latin America in the past. This process manifests itself most palpably in the realignment of US-Panamanian relations that follows the ratification of the new Canal treaties. Yet the Panama Canal issue antedates a more sweeping reassessment and redirection of US-Latin American relations and indeed of all of US foreign policy under the rubric of human rights. The United States is embarked upon a course of deliberately lowering its profile in Latin America.

Lowering its profile in Latin America will prove difficult, if not impossible, for the United States for a number of reasons. The United States has been and will remain the principal economic, political, and military power in any hemispheric equation. The region itself has historically been a principal testing ground for US policy initiatives beginning with the Monroe Doctrine, "big stick" diplomacy, collective security, and the American thrust into Third World nation-building efforts. The United States has attempted to construct a community of nations having a "special relationship" composed of geography, history, and some common political forms. In return for the special relationship—embodied by the Organization of American States and a plethora of inter-American agreements—the countries of Latin America have been, by and large, important and consistent supporters of US foreign policy preferences. The unequal relationship of the United States as a superpower, and the limited (and often negligible) power capabilities of the Latin American countries, made it quite easy and often convenient to maintain the myth fantasy of the "special relationship." With the development of a multipolar world, the rise of new forms of power represented by economic resources, and the diminishing utility of crude forms of suasion in international affairs, future relations will be characterized by greater latitude and leverage for Latin American countries in the conduct of their own foreign affairs—a condition that will take some time for all concerned to accommodate.

To these calculations must be added another: the asymmetry that characterizes the entire range of inter-American issues. Whereas the region is deemed to be in a "special relationship" with the United States, it is in fact of low-level importance in US foreign policy and even that level may be in decline relative to other regions of the world. Some crude indicators support this point. The United States had $22.2 billion of its $133.1 billion cumulative investments abroad in Latin America in 1975. Western Europe trades more with Latin America than the United States does—whose exports expressed in terms of regional imports fell from 39 percent in 1960 to 31 percent in 1975. Moreover, the total of US exports and imports to and from Latin America account for less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the two trillion dollars US Gross National Product. In strategic materials, Venezuela provided 17.2 percent of US petroleum imports in 1975.[3] Mexican petroleum will be an increasingly important component of the US and world energy picture. Jamaican bauxite is also important, but when all is said and

done there are no vital strategic materials in Latin America that are not available elsewhere.

The availability of strategic materials and the level of trade are not by themselves sufficient indicators of the relative importance of an area. Latin America is important to the United States because, to borrow a term from military jargon, it is an "economy of force" area. Basically, the United States desires that no serious problems arise in the area that demand attention and resources that must be allocated elsewhere, in other words an environment that minimizes its own security liabilities. Expressed more philosophically, the United States "has an interest in legitimate and strong regimes that adequately respond to popular demands, not in stability for its own sake . . . an interest in representative regimes that fully and fairly defend their national interest . . . ."[4] Thus, though Latin America may be important in these subjective ways, in global terms it is at best of secondary importance to the United States.

If Latin America is of low and declining importance to the United States, the opposite is not true. Abraham Lowenthal, an astute observer of inter-American affairs asserts the following: "Inter-American relations are basically asymmetrical. What is important to Latin America may be marginal in Washington, or what is perceived as advantageous in Washington may seem exploitative in Latin America. With this asymmetry tension inevitably results." And: "The making of US policy toward Latin America has a special character, different from the making of policy toward industrialized countries, which derives from the confluence of important economic interests, negligible security interests, and little other recognized reason for continuing US government concern. Latin American affairs seldom receive high-level attention. . . ."[5]

US-LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY RELATIONS— PAST AND FUTURE

The asymmetries in US-Latin American relations are perhaps best illustrated in the development of military relations. It is a generally accepted notion that Latin America has a limited role to play in US world military strategy. Nonetheless, military strategists have long attempted to define the value of the region in terms of US military requirements—such as preventing the establishment of hostile power bases and influence; retaining access to lines of communication, to

strategic resources and bases; and precluding intraregional strife.[6] Latin America is pretty much on the periphery of the war scenarios conjured up for NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontations. Outside of the requirement to station forces in the Canal Zone and for the security assistance programs administered through the Southern Command, US military resources were husbanded for more critical areas of the world. Collective security, issuing from the hemispheric anti-Axis posture that became codified in the Rio Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (1947) and thereafter elaborated into anti-Communist alliance, was the conceptual framework that gave rise to a web of political-military relationships, bilateral as well as multilateral.

Through these relationships, formalized into security assistance pacts, the United States became, for all practical purposes, the main source of military doctrine, armaments, and training. These relationships also had important political ramifications—they served to identify and align the Latin American military establishments solidly in the direction of the West. It was also a fond wish of the United States that through US-sponsored training and exposure to a modern military system, not only would they become effective anti-Communists, but also more competent military men that would remain apolitical and help establish the bases for democracy. It turns out that Latin American military men are anti-Communist for institutional and cultural reasons and that greater professionalization and exposure to foreign assistance may in fact have increased their propensity to be politically active at the expense of civilian counterparts.[7]

Throughout the halcyon days of collective security it was well understood that the United States would attend to the defense of the hemisphere in the unlikely event of an extracontinental threat to its security. Moreover, the United States could be depended upon through its leverage and the somewhat defective inter-American peacekeeping machinery to mediate and moderate any local conflicts.

At the same time, the Latins viewed and continue to view their relations with the northern superpower ambivalently: the United States was seen as a protector against the outside threat and "a menace in her own right"[8] to their national interests. Moreover, in cases where it felt its vital interests were directly challenged, the collective security machinery of the Organization of American States proved too cumbersome and the United States acted unilaterally—namely in the Bay of Pigs (1961), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), and the Dominican Republic (1965).

Asymmetric perceptions entered the picture here also. Whereas the United States viewed gravely the emergence of internal threats that might produce environments propitious for the growth of communism, the Latin Americans were equally concerned, if not more so, about their sovereignty being violated by the United States and by other Latin American states. Thus, Latin Americans viewed and continue to view the Rio Treaty and the Organization of American States "not primarily as an alliance against an external threat but rather as an elaborate juridical and moral structure to limit US intervention in the Hemisphere."[9]

Recently, the asymmetry has grown to include differing perceptions of what constitutes not only the threat but also the definition of security. The Latin Americans have promoted the concept of economic security within an expanded definition of national security and national integration, whereas the United States has been very reluctant to discuss collective economic security in inter-American fora. In the protocol of San Jose (1975), the United States attached a reservation to the effect "that it accepts no obligation or commitment to negotiate, sign, or ratify a treaty or convention on the subject of collective economic security."[10] Secretary of State Henry Kissinger firmly criticized the proposed new draft Charter of the OAS for its prescriptions on collective economic security: "I regret to say that it is one that our government could neither sign nor recommend that our Senate ratify. It includes prescriptive and hortatory statements of general principle which are as poorly defined as they are ominous."[11]

Moreover, within the framework of collective security, US-Latin American military relations developed a body of common organizations, doctrine, and training that did not necessarily equate with a common world view and shared perception of the threat and of the concept of security. John Child, in his extensive writings on inter-American security, indicates that military cooperation developed into an Inter-American Military System, which though it may not qualify as a fully integrated and goal-oriented entity, has nevertheless important components and functions and "merits consideration by virtue of the fact that politically significant individuals and institutions within the Americas have acknowledged its existence and have expressed concern over its purposes and strength."[12]

The components of the system have been the following: the Inter-American Defense Board (founded in 1941 and the oldest multilateral military organization the United States participates in); the

Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance; security assistance programs; the Inter-American Defense College; US Military Latin Americanists; the Central American Defense Council; the US Southern Command; hemispheric conferences of Service chiefs; joint maneuvers and combined exercises such as the "UNITAS" naval exercises; communications facilities; training programs for the Latin American military in Panama and the United States; and unsuccessful efforts to create an Inter-American Peace Force. With the exception of the Inter-American Peace Force, which was pretty much a dead issue by the late 1960's, most of the other components are being seriously questioned as to whether they are worth retaining.

Along with these organizations and institutions, military relations subsumed certain common strategic concepts. These concepts, mostly derivatives of World War II and the "cold war," increasingly became sources of dispute and the eventual weakening of the military system. To begin with, the Latin Americans objected to the idea of developing a formal instrument of collective security as propounded by the United States. In the 1950's, monolithic communism was perceived as the principal threat by the United States and its European allies. The Latin Americans not only did not share fully in this perception, but they resented the fact that the United States neglected them in favor of Europe and Northeast Asia.

Consensus in favor of an Inter-American Military System reached its apogee in the years coinciding with Fidel Castro's export of the revolution. A credible threat emerged as Cuba attempted to convert the Andes into the Sierra Maestra of Latin America. The outcome of this was the development of an expanded strategic concept and a high level of military cooperation between the United States and Latin America. Internal defense and development became the guiding concept for combatting the spread of revolutionary communism. This consensus developed at a time when the United States itself entered a period of hyperactivity in confronting the sweeping tide of Communist expansion in Third World areas—as was perceived in the Vietnam and Dominican Republic contingencies, and development efforts such as the Alliance for Progress to help establish the bases for more viable liberal democracies that would become alternatives to communism.

During this period the United States and a number of Latin American countries constructed impressive programs to deal with the *focos* of guerrilla activity, such as counterinsurgency and civic action. Existing multilateral organizations revitalized and new ones were

created such as the Inter-American Defense College and a US unified command in the Canal Zone. Military cooperation reached the high-water mark in the period 1959-67,[13] even though the Cuban revolutionary threat was not universally perceived. The United States itself may have overestimated the vulnerability of Latin American societies to revolution and overcommitted resources accordingly.[14]

The past 10 years have witnessed a drastic decline of consensus in favor of the utility of the inter-American military relations. The reasons for this are varied. In 1965, the United States again demonstrated its propensity to go it alone in the Dominican Republic intervention. Moreover, Vietnam preoccupied American attention and Latin America was subjected to "benign neglect" during the Nixon years and the Watergate trauma. In Latin America there developed indigenous national security doctrines that focused on internal economic development and national integration—the Brazilian doctrine refined in the Escola Superior de Guerra and Peru's originally radical concept of national integration propounded by its Centro de Altos Estudios Militares. The Brazilian and Peruvian "models" are perhaps the most important developments in inter-American affairs since the end of World War II. Both concepts, variously adapted by other Latin countries, equate social integration and economic development with national security—the notion that a nation is not safe from external and internal threats unless it attains these attributes. Importantly also, the future leaders of Latin America, many of whom will have been trained in these civilian-military technocratic milieus, will be strongly imbued with these doctrines. The new national security doctrines merged with the flowering of dependency theory as a way of explaining Latin America's marginal location in international military relations.[15]

Concurrently, the liberal democratic experiment gave way to a new wave of militarism that is nationalistic and developmentalist, heavily imbued with the notion that upon the shoulders of an increasingly competent military rested the burden of building a nation. Ideological pluralism with a greater tolerance for more radical approaches to nation-building became firmly fixed by 1970—characterized by a less menacing Cuba, Allende's socialist experiment in Chile, and the Peruvian Revolution. Brazil's economic miracle demonstrated at the same time the significant potential of an authoritarian military-technocratic approach to development. All in all, by the mid 1970's, there was mounting evidence that Latin American countries were making important institutional and programmatic strides at more effective government, even if some indicators existed to the contrary.

By the early 1970's, important changes in arms transfers were becoming evident. On the part of the United States, congressional restrictions began to limit total US sales to Latin America—a region which normally accounts for a minuscule portion of the world's arms market. Further, US legislation inhibited the sale of "sophisticated" weapons to Latin America. These restrictions combined with the fact that the United States, because of its other commitments, did not have available for sale the variety of items desired by Latin Americans in this latest arms purchasing cycle.[16] The principal impact is that the United States is no longer the prime source of armaments—France has been the largest foreign source since the early 1970's, the Soviets breached the Western monopoly in Peru, and currently Israel competes with the United States in the region. Thus any leverage the United States may have had through arms transfers is diminishing. Moreover, indigenous arms industries are developing in Brazil and Argentina.

Additional determinants have very recently entered the equation—most notably, human rights considerations codified into law by congressional legislation and accentuated by President Carter's foreign policy. The human rights provisions inserted into the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 prohibit security assistance to governments found to be conducting gross violations of their citizens' human rights. They also require congressional review of all arms sales of over $25 million. Since human rights became the cornerstone of Carter's foreign policy, Latin American countries whose record in that area has been negative—Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Argentina—were singled out for termination of grant and credit assistance.

The impact of human rights upon political-military relations has been dramatic. Six countries either unilaterally terminated military assistance agreements or rejected US assistance and have generally assumed a harder line toward continued military cooperation with the United States. The Brazilians, who were also reacting against US displeasure with the nuclear technology transfer agreement with West Germany, pulled out of the Joint US-Brazilian Military Commission in mid 1977. The Argentines cancelled participation in hemispheric naval exercises. The reasoning was as follows: the United States had adopted a selective and morally inconsistent posture. They argued, moreover, that they were being treated shabbily because they were not strategically important enough to warrant exceptions by reason of US national security—as in the cases of South Korea and the Philippines.

The Latin Americans read the human rights program from a different perspective. Whereas the United States is concerned about individual human rights (an argument which is not wholly convincing to them since they believe that the thrust may also be intended for other purposes—such as internal foreign policy consensus in the United States and the accompanying need to generate leverage against the Soviet Union), they believe it is not concerned about the violation of individual and collective rights of societies at war with Marxist guerrillas. They charge in addition that the United States does not show sensitivity to the problems of societies faced with the inevitable tensions and violence associated with development. They thus tend to see a form of moral intervention that is not altogether altruistic.

These recent initiatives by the United States have contributed to problems in military relations. Many countries feel abandoned by the United States precisely at the time when both the internal and external threat is more credible to them than at any time since the early 1960's. Recent Soviet-Cuban triumphs in Angola and Ethiopia and the stratagem of "intervention by invitation" there have awakened fears in southern South America about an increasing Soviet naval presence in the South Atlantic, and in the Caribbean about Cuban intentions.[17] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and South Africa are rumored to be considering the formation of a South Atlantic Treaty Organization. Such a prospect is not in the cards,[18] but these indigenous perceptions indicate that Latin Americans do not take these events lightly and do possess a capacity, if somewhat limited, to undertake initiatives that may in the long run not be in the interest of the United States.

The United States appears embarked on an effort to redesign its international relations, to dismantle the rigid system developed since 1945, and reassert its legitimacy as a spokesman for democratic values—a standing diminished by Vietnam and Watergate, and the association of sinister intentions in policy toward the Third World. It is attempting to depart from the grim fixation with the Soviet threat and more equitably distribute its gaze toward Western Europe and Japan, and establish a stronger influence in the Third World. The record of these early initiatives in Latin America contain both genuine successes and setbacks. In the Caribbean the United States has regained the confidence of and reestablished a working relationship with Jamaica, Guyana, and other "Caribbean Socialist" countries. However, in South America strained relations persist with influential countries—notably Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Because of the peculiarities of the issue,

the Panama Canal Treaties are not a good measure of either success or of failure in overall Latin America policy.

The human rights program will not necessarily make countries any safer for democracy; it may in fact make them safer from democracy as it strengthens antidemocratic forces in the target country. An effort to champion the cause in Brazil may harden its decision to acquire nuclear technology and even help to galvanize popular support for that government—thereby diminishing the chances of achieving the commendable goal of checking nuclear proliferation and of promoting political liberalization.

Brazil, whether or not it truly achieves its aspirations of becoming a more integrated political entity with the economic and military attributes of a major world power, will in the succeeding 10 to 15 years challenge the creativity of US political and military diplomacy. It already perceives a greater role for itself in South America and Africa and has the potential to become a useful ally of the United States in those two areas. It is well on the way toward developing an impressive naval surveillance capability, and is already exporting military equipment. Brazil will be a major political and economic factor in the contiguous areas of South America and can perform important functions for the West in building bridges between the Third World and the industrialized nations. It may achieve a modest nuclear capability before the end of the century. If it does so it may thus spur Argentina to do the same. In the meantime, it will be imperative to maintain military to military communications as Brazil emerges as a more assertive force in international affairs under the continued guidance of a predominantly military government.

CONCLUSIONS

The next two decades will see the continuation of geopolitical changes: the continued growth of strong and effective national governments, the competition for resources, the resurgence of traditional rivalries and border tensions, and the diffusion of military power to include the possibility of nuclear proliferation. In the aggregate, these trends indicate that Latin America will be less and less beholden to the policy preferences of the United States. Indeed, multipolarity will engender a loosening of traditional alignments that will grant greater flexibility to the Latin Americans. Perhaps this process is inevitable as nations mature, yet it is imperative that an

environment conducive to working out problems and common objectives remain.

A number of conclusions are possible. If the United States wishes to maintain useful relations with the Latin American militaries, it must be prepared to articulate its security interests more broadly and accommodate Latin American notions of security. The definition has often been irrelevant to the Latin American environment. Moreover, the functions of military relations are poorly understood. Combined military planning and exercises are secondary to the achievement of larger political objectives. The military is a pivotal force in politics and will remain so in the majority of the countries beyond the midrange. At the same time also, it must be understood that an enthusiastic embrace of military rule may be counterproductive, since they are narrowly-based governments.

As international politics become more complex, countries, whatever their size, develop military needs. If the United States has a desire in self-reliant allies that help minimize its security risks, then it is appropriate to recognize this fact. Given the congressional temper and the major commitment by the Carter Administration to human rights and to arms control, and the marginal priority assigned to Latin America, it is difficult to see how the United States may be responsive to even minimum legitimate military needs in the future. Therefore, the United States ought to be prepared to deal with an emerging complex of security relations where it may no longer be the prime source of assistance. It can do so in part by encouraging restraint in weapons procurement by supporting regional arms control efforts—such as the 1974 Ayacucho declaration. Ultimately, it must make clearer its own policies, make them less selective and more universal, so that Latin American countries can anticipate them adequately.

The entire range of questions related to security assistance, leverage, and military professionalization needs to be reexamined. Does security assistance entail influence and leverage, and if so, in what direction? What kind of influence is generated by US relations with Latin American militaries? The naive notion that military men are the same and will all become competent professionals like their US counterparts by being exposed to them has caused the United States problems. A multipolar world will be too complicated for simple unilinear formulations to suffice.

Ultimately, military relations must make sense in the political context. If there are larger overarching disagreements of an economic

and political nature, military relations will tend to reflect that fact. As long as these larger issues of a divisive nature occupy center stage, military relations will not be so warm and cooperative, particularly if military leaders are also the political decisionmakers. The prescription offered here is not entirely bold. The United States should reverse the current trend of estrangement and elevate military relations with Latin America to a higher political level. With Brazil, in recognition of that country's prominence, the United States should initiate steps to establish a forum for periodic consultations at the political and military level on common security interests. The mechanism may be developed from the Memorandum of Understanding. It would be appropriate to consider such a forum for the entire inter-American community. Unless the trend reverses, "the likelihood of an unfriendly, uncooperative, and united Latin America, determined to make use of domestic resources and international pressure tactics as a means to negotiate better treatment from the United States, cannot be totally dismissed."[19]

ENDNOTES

1. John Child, *The Inter-American Military System: Historical Development, Current Trends and Implications for US Policy,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, October 23, 1977, p. 33. This highly insightful paper was originally presented for the symposium on "Inter-American Security and the United States," held at the US Army War College on January 20-22, 1977.

2. Helio Jaguaribe, "La America Latina Ante El Siglo XXI," *El Trimestre Economico,* Vol. XLI, April/June 1974, p. 419. For perceptive assessments of the changing Latin American international environment see, in addition to Jaguaribe, Riordan Roett, "The Changing Nature of Latin American International Relations: Geopolitical Realities," in Report of the Commission on United States–Latin American Relations, *The Americas in a Changing World,* New York: Quadrangle, 1975; Roett, "Brazil Ascendant: International Relations and Geopolitics in the Late 20th Century," *Journal of International Affairs,* Vol. 29, No. 2, Fall 1975; G. Pope Atkins, *Latin America in the International Political System,* New York: Free Press, 1977.

3. Above figures abstracted from US Council on International Economic Policy, *International Economic Report of the President,* US Government Printing Office, 1977.

4. Albert Fishlow, *Debt, Growth, and Hemispheric Relations: Latin American Prospects in the 1980s,* unpublished paper, Berkeley: University of California, 1977, p. 55.

5. Abraham Lowenthal, "The Making of US Policies Toward Latin America," *Latinamericanist,* Vol. 10, No. 1, November 18, 1974, p. 4.

6. An excellent and highly readable example of this type of writing is contained in Raymond A. Komorowski, *US Strategic Interests in Latin America and the Impact of the NATO Short War Strategy,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, July 29, 1977.

7. On this point see John S. Fitch, *The Political Consequences of US Military Assistance to Latin America,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, October 15, 1977; also his *The Military Coup d'Etat as a Political Process, 1948-1966,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

8. John Child, "Alliance Theory and the Organization of American States," unpublished paper, 1974; contained in Child's *The US-Latin American Strategic Relationship,* collection of papers, 1965-1977, on deposit at the US Army War College Library.

9. *Ibid.,* p. 8.

10. Cited in G. Pope Atkins, *Mutual Security in the Changing Inter-American System: An Appraisal of OAS Charter and Rio Treaty Revisions,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, July 25, 1977, p. 18.

11. *Ibid.,* p. 19.

12. John Child, *The Inter-American Military System: Historical Development, Current Trends and Implications for US Policy,* p. 2.

13. *Ibid.,* p. 12.

14. An alternative thesis for the Cuban export of revolution is defensive expansion: in order to defend it internally at home and from the United States, Cuba opted to create revolutionary situations in Latin America to distract US attention and pin down its resources. The same explanation may apply to Cuba's African revolutionary commitments. The thesis is appealing, but it is not a sufficient explanation for the Cuban revolutionary thrust.

15. The distinguished Peruvian military intellectual General Edgardo Mercado Jarrin has asserted: "The technology of modern warfare has caused industrial development to be a preponderant factor in national power. . . . The most tyrannical kind of dependence is military technological dependence." "Relations between Policy and Military Strategy," *Oiga (Lima),* March 15, 1974, pp. 18-20, 44-46. Cited in David Ronfeldt and Caesar Sereseres, *U.S. Arms Transfers, Diplomacy, and Security in Latin America and Beyond,* Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, October 1977, p. 15.

16. For an insightful analysis of current trends in arms transfers to Latin America, see Norman M. Smith, *Conventional Arms Transfers to Latin America,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, August 8, 1977.

17. Cuba's overseas combat deployments have generated some fears in the immediate Caribbean area about possible aggressive intentions, and the likelihood of scenarios of Cuban military assistance to kindred socialist countries or of intervention by invitation. This writer sustains that this possibility is remote because: Cuba has not established sufficient identification with any regional Marxist/Socialist faction who might request assistance; there is no power vacuum which Cuba could exploit militarily without eliciting a counterreaction from the United States.

18. Principally because there may be no need for it and such an organization would have a limited security capability. See Margaret Daly Hayes, *Brazil and the South Atlantic: Changing Perspectives on an Emerging Issue,* paper prepared for Seminar on Brazil and the South Atlantic at the Center of Brazilian Studies of the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, March 14, 1978.

19. Caesar Sereseres, *The Future of US Military Diplomacy in the Hemisphere,* Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, November 11, 1977, p. 15.

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This memorandum analyzes the dynamic Latin American geopolitical environment, develops implications for US interests, and suggests the policy response to protect its interests.

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